

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) A message router for routing a message between a server and a protocol gateway ~~and a server~~, the message router comprising:

an authenticator to authenticate that a particular source of a message is an authorized user of a messaging network, said authenticator authenticating said particular source of said message before said message is routed by said message router ~~between a protocol gateway and a server~~;

a load balancer module to determine a least recently used protocol gateway supporting a protocol of said source of said message; and ~~a database accessible by said message router and adapted to store information relating to routing and authentication of said particular source of said message~~

routing said message to said determined least recently used protocol gateway.

20. (canceled)

21. (previously presented) The message router according to claim 19, wherein:

said message router is a least recently used message router.

22. (previously presented) The message router according to claim 19, wherein:

said message router routes said message to a most specific server corresponding to a message key.

23. (previously presented) The message router according to claim 19, wherein:

said message router routes said message based on a content of said message.

24. (currently amended) A method of routing a message between a server and a protocol gateway ~~and a server~~ comprising:

authenticating that a particular source of a message is an authorized user of a messaging network before said message is routed by a message router ~~between a protocol gateway and a server~~;

determining a least recently used protocol gateway supporting protocol of said source of said message; and ~~accessing a database by said message router; and storing information relating to routing and authentication of said particular source of said message~~

routing said message to said determined least recently used protocol gateway.

25. (canceled)

26. (previously presented) The method of routing a message according to claim 24, wherein:

said server is a least recently used message router.

27. (previously presented) The method of routing a message according to claim 24, further comprising:

routing said message to a most specific server corresponding to a message key.

28. (previously presented) The method of routing a message according to claim 24, further comprising:

routing said message based on a content of said message.

29. (currently amended) An apparatus for routing a message between a server and a protocol gateway ~~and a server~~ comprising:

means for authenticating that a particular source of a message is an authorized user of a messaging network before said message is routed by a message router ~~between a protocol gateway and a server~~;

means for determining a least recently used protocol gateway supporting protocol of said source of said message; and ~~means for accessing a database by said message router; and means for storing information relating to routing and authentication of said particular source of said message~~

means for routing said message to said determined least recently used protocol gateway.

30. (canceled)

31. (previously presented) The apparatus for routing a message according to claim 29, wherein:

said server is a least recently used message router.

32. (previously presented) The apparatus for routing a message according to claim 29, further comprising:

means for routing said message to a most specific server corresponding to a message key.

33. (previously presented) The apparatus for routing a message according to claim 29, further comprising:

means for routing said message based on a content of said message.

34-41. (canceled)